

SECURITY INFORMATION

Following is our reply to this morning's telephone questions of DD/I with addendum for attention of D/GI, DD/GI, and DD/P. Bear in mind throughout that we have no recent intelligence bearing on these matters except newspapers.

1. Our instinctive amateur feeling is that official Soviet broadcast is correct; that is, Stalin suffered stroke on night of March 1-2, 1953.

2. Concerning possible developments in the internal power position, three things may be said over and above our analysis in The Dynamics of Soviet Society:

- (a) Communist Party Congress was occasion for relative elevation of Malenkov as against the field;
- (b) phrasing of announcement indicates likelihood that decisions at present moment controlled by Malenkov. In particular, note the priority in phrase "the great misfortune which has befallen our Party and our people."

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- (c) Crystallization of power relationships may take considerable time, hence post-death evidence should not be taken as definitive.

Despite Malenkov's public position and his role in Party structure, unclear whether he holds requisite power for succession until there is evidence that he effectively and directly controls the Secret Police and the armed forces. The fact that the Council of Ministers and the Central Committee of the Communist Party appear to be acting as the government does not constitute in itself definitive evidence as to the locus of real power. If, as is possible but not proved, Secretariat of the Central Committee is operating in the role old Politburo, this will be important evidence for rise of Malenkov and Party back towards dominance of the state structure. Secretariat contains none of older Bolsheviks except Krushchev. As now constituted, Secretariat is certainly dominated by Malenkov. Hence Secretariat control would imply that Beria, Bulganin, Molotov, Voroshilov, Mikoyan, and Kaganovich have already been excluded from effective power. We have no evidence that the Secretariat dominates the decisions of the Presidium or that the rising power of Malenkov has achieved the monopoly stage necessary to constitute true succession. It is self-evident that our intelligence must focus at highest priority

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on this issue. Aside from watching every clue as to the control over the Secret Police and the armed forces (including evidence in satellites, embassies, etc.) we suggest that we establish who now controls the Kremlin Guards, a unit which holds life-and-death power over those who enter the Kremlin for meetings, and a function of ancient importance in situations like the present.

3. On assumption that struggle for power, if any, at present confined within Kremlin, we expect the following reactions in Soviet policy:

- (a) a dramatic and heightened effort to solidify the country in the face of the alleged hostile world environment;
- (b) an effort to present to the outside world an appearance of governmental unity, strength and, especially, continuity in policy;
- (c) an avoidance for the time being of any risky external adventures over and above those now under way; and
- (d) an effort to bridge the emotional and ideological gap which Stalin's death will create throughout the whole of the Communist bloc. The regime

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will see it as vital to prevent the emergence of the notion that Stalin's death opens up fresh options in Soviet internal and external policy. As in the case of Lenin's death, the regime is likely to use the device of invoking Stalin's name in justification for all its major acts.

If we get evidence of any adventurous external move, we believe this can be taken virtually as prima facie evidence that the domestic power situation is not secure. No matter how carefully preparations have been made for Stalin's death, no matter how completely Malenkov's succession has been arranged--if it has--the new regime will require time to organize itself. And if--as is wholly possible--a succession has been only incompletely arranged, Malenkov's instinct will be to avoid new external complications so that he can devote himself wholeheartedly to task of consolidation. Only in extreme case of major struggle for power is it probable that some Soviet leaders might regard major war as the most promising device for the securing of their power (see pp. 265-66, The Dynamics of Soviet Society).

*Good*

We suggest testing the reaction pattern of Soviet regime by raising certain issues for decision by the regime which could not (repeat, not) be regarded as threatening by them or by the

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Free World. Perhaps some aspects of the Austrian Treaty negotiation might be considered for this purpose; the East-West Trade meeting in Geneva, or others that will readily occur to you. The proposal at the end of this message might prove the most effective test of this kind.

We strongly emphasize importance of appreciating the emotional shock which Stalin's death will produce within the Soviet Union and throughout the Communist bloc, among friend and foe, self-seeking bureaucrat and enthusiast. In a way unique in modern times, Stalin, as a symbol of authority, temporal and spiritual, has been built into the lives of citizens of Communist areas. Neither Malenkov nor any other figure now alive can fill this gap in the immediate future. The shock effect will undoubtedly diminish with time. Over the next days, however, it constitutes a unique vulnerability, a method for the exploitation of which is suggested at end of message.

4. With respect to Mao: he has entered into an alliance with the Soviet Union on the basis of his comparative interests, as he sees them. In particular, we believe it likely the leverage that the Soviet Union can exercise over Manchuria has played an extremely important part in the Sino-Soviet relationship. Mao has reserved to himself, both ideologically and in terms of internal policy, a degree of independence shared by no other Communist figure now alive (except, of course, Tito).

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We doubt that Mao will take or will react to any fresh initiatives vis-a-vis the Western world until he is clear concerning both the solidity of the new power arrangements in the Soviet Union, and especially whether Soviet policy will increase or decrease its degree of encroachment on areas of Mao's own believed sovereignty. In time his performance is likely to depend also on what he conceives to be the realistic alternatives held out to him by the non-Communist world.

Mao certainly will not accept an increased degree of ideological dictation from a new Soviet regime. If our view above is correct, however, his relationship depends less on ideology than on the substance of Sino-Soviet relations concerning Manchuria, trade, Southeast Asian communist parties, and Soviet contribution to internal Chinese development and the Korean War. If Mao judges the situation in Moscow to be weakened, he may press for an increased degree of sovereignty in Manchuria and in other places where his mandate is now tempered by Soviet influence.

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Following is additional comment we should like to add for the urgent attention of Dulles, Cabell, and Wisner, as well as Becker. Given the acute but temporary traumatic state of emotion in the Soviet Union and in the Communist bloc, we

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believe the government should consider a major Presidential initiative within the week made with Congressional backing if possible, along the following lines.

1. We should state that Stalin's death marks the end of an era and opens up fresh option for the Russian peoples. In particular it offers them a unique opportunity to remake their relations with the rest of the world;

2. The President should evoke the common wartime effort and the common wartime goals of the two nations for a peaceful, orderly world;

3. He should emphasize and illustrate in concrete terms that there is no incompatibility between American interests and objectives and the legitimate interests and objectives of the Russian nation and its peoples; and

4. He should announce his intention to initiate in concert with our allies a meeting in the near future designed to re-examine the possibilities of agreement on controlled armaments, Germany, Austria, and other substantive issues in contention. There are, we believe, four reasons for such action:

- (a) as a matter of historical record, the United States must not let this possibly brief period of unsettlement in the Russian outlook go by without holding up an image of our true intentions and purposes;

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- (b) such an initiative would solidify the Free World in its posture towards our future relations with the Soviet Union;
- (c) such an initiative would help counter the fears of American aggression cultivated by Soviet propaganda and inevitably heightened by Stalin's removal from the scene. It would thus encourage those close to power who may be prepared to consider internal and external policies different from those of Stalin; and
- (d) such an initiative would immediately confront the regime with a major policy decision of the first order of magnitude and help reveal its inner constitution and conflicts.

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